

Christianity and Crisis

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DETROIT

IT IS hard to determine when distrust of one nation for another nation may not be, at bottom, distrust of itself, lack of faith in its own resources in coping with difficult internal adjustments as well as in its international associations. Suspicion that a rival nation may use its power for evil rather than for good is often an inverted misgiving that the vaunted rectitude of ones' own nation may not stand the test of great power. So it is that an estimate of the volume of international distrust in any period is, to a degree, a measure of more than the insecurity of nations in relation to each other. This mutual lack of faith marks the limits of confidence that each nation has in its own integrity.

In the coming weeks and months, decisions will be made which will determine whether the world is to move slowly and painfully toward ordered justice or to the abyss of anarchy and destruction. We all know that this decision is in the making, but the fateful scene seems remote and impregnable to the little that individuals or even large groups can do to effect the outcome.

It does not take too much imagination to observe in those whom we habitually meet from day to day the imprint of the uncertainties, the struggle to change defeatism into the will to act, and the hidden fears which now make up the life of that larger personality that we call, the world.

There is a curious reticence in groups once vocal with "solutions" for this and that, a plodding insistence on old techniques and an unwonted resistance to the idea that some hitherto objectives of thought and action may need rethinking. This mood seems to be something other than spineless withdrawal in a search for security. It is as though we were waiting for a new and reliable answer to the old question—What is the meaning of life?—and were aware that we must find it within ourselves.

In a world in which sanity is at a premium, we are struggling for the kind of sanity so desperately needed and so costly to hold. A new kind of individualism is germinating, more uncomfortable to house than the old. The idea of personal responsibility is spreading more rapidly than awareness of the techniques that can give it effectiveness. Com-

mitment to a responsible relationship to all the peoples of the world is today stronger than the old impulses to get along at the cost of others. But it is as yet a homeless commitment, for we do not know how to bring it to life.

How shall we find sanity, wholeness of life, in a scene making for divided personalities—at war with themselves even as the world exists in a state of war?

The idea of sanity is too large to be compounded of stated elements, but todays' sanity would certainly include these inclinations of the mind and spirit: Political realism; ability to discriminate a sense of personal responsibility in terms of the timelessness of the purposes of God; an enlarging concept of human life as it should be for all peoples; enjoyment of all that is true, good and beautiful. Each of these carries with it its own dangers, but sanity itself is a perilous way of life in today's world.

Political realism would inform our ability to look at the facts without wishful thinking, and to plot our way step by step in conformity with the facts in any situation. But what are the facts in our relationships with other nations? And political realism can lead to time-saving compromise with the forces of evil.

If the purposes of God are timeless, how, in the span of a lifetime, can we hope to affect, by one iota, these timeless goals for human existence? There is no use in struggling at great cost to reach some goal dated far beyond our lifetime. Let another generation find the answer.

It is easier on the conscience to assume that hunger and pestilence are the inevitable and relatively irremediable consequences of war than to believe that generous and large-scale methods can be found for dealing with them. Yet we cannot find today's equivalent for sanity save as we believe that the resources of the earth can be shared in a world society in which men everywhere can live in freedom from want. The blue-print for the Kingdom of God is meager, and our step-by-step progress is toward a goal circumscribed by self-interest.

We live in an age of general awareness that even these limited objectives for human welfare are receding. There is a numbness in the muscles of the spirit, a foreboding sense that the only natural habit

of the mind is the cheap courage of fatalism. It is time therefore to enjoy and cherish all that is of worth—whatsoever things are true, just, pure and lovely. These are common experiences, for they are of God. In the divisions and segregations that have resulted from war, these experiences are a common

bond, uniting us, in a way of mystery, to the eternal life of God.

The constant discipline of honoring and encouraging all that is of good report is much more difficult than the exorcising of suspicion and distrust—of individuals or of nations.

R. E. Mc.

Repentance Must Be Individual

CHAPLAIN WILLIAM T. RIVIERE

In an apparently nice, orthodox, historic way, we American church people on these recent wartime Sundays have been saying Amen to official wartime professions of penitence for our sins. We even did this on weekdays, especially at ecclesiastical conferences and convocations.

But a reasonably careful reader and listener finds some of this mental and spiritual food rather tasteless. The seasoning is incomplete. Perhaps the salt is lacking. It took human collapses and nervousness to teach some war work plants what the army and the oil industry had already learned, the need for salt.

One is inclined to believe, from large-eared contacts with many men, that quite a number of Americans, in and out of the church, rarely trouble themselves to repent, though there may be remorse for individual acts which produce human suffering. Important doctrinal considerations are omitted here. But church or no church, preaching or no preaching, general confession or shorter catechism, many a man plans quite confidently to face the future on a basis of the general average of his sincerity, his effort, his honor and honesty, and his customary decency. Without question he expects to receive a passing grade; his criterion is his own estimate of himself. He takes no account of the softening effect of gentle memory. He ignores the fact that a healthy mind protects itself by encysting shameful recollections, and covers the pain of defeat by scabs and scar tissue which make it easy to forget. His record may be like his bank account when he has failed to stub some checks. The possibility of red ink on his statement is unimaginable. Foreseeing no surprise when judged by another, he does not really participate in any communal repentance at church.

Repentance must be an individual act. "We have done those things which we ought not to have done" means "I have done" and "I ought not" and "I". The "we" is an actual sum of I's. It is not, "I, a total abstainer, confess that some of us have been drunken"; nor, "I, an honest man, confess that some of us engage in crooked deals, some of us, but not

I." It is not even, "I, personally honest, confess that under our economic system some of us have unfair gains at the expense of the less fortunate; and I confess that the group of which I am a part sometimes has unworthy representatives who demand too much in hope of getting our fair share." The sincere and sensitive soul with a delicate feeling for truth has concrete and specific sins of its own in mind when confessing sin in private or public prayer. He confesses his individual share in collective guilt.

Have you ever heard a revivalist in free prayer endeavoring publicly to phrase the confessions of some of his targets? He may utter the specific admission for some trifling husband or some nagging wife, for a swindler or for a thief. With all his honesty he is not himself confessing any guilt for those sins.

Isaiah, when called to high service, confessed his own unworthiness. Then he paralleled that with, "I dwell among a people of unclean lips." That was less a confession for his people than a disclaimer of the human error which John the Baptist was to denounce, "We have Abraham to our father." Isaiah's own lips were touched with a glowing stone (New Translation, Jewish Pub. Soc.) and his iniquity was taken away.

When these paragraphs were first written at the Presidio of San Francisco in the fall of 1942, a good deal of national repentance was being published in resolutions and sermons that affect me like this vicarious confession of the revivalist. Nearly three years later on the night when Japan surrendered there are perceptible signs of a lush crop of the same not very nourishing vegetation. Prohibitionists confess our intemperance. Social-minded preachers confess our nation's social and economic sins. Civilians confess the sins which they attribute to the armed forces. Kindly souls prate about our sins of violence and intolerance, to all of which the writer usually says Amen. But something is missing.

Of course the first person singular need not always announce his own sins. Sometime he ought to, perhaps; and speakers of a certain type do so *ad nauseam*, even boastfully. The writer of these lines

may or may not be personally humble about failures and shortcomings of his own. Leave him to his own judge. Let me be merely the voice of a lonesome coyote crying from a wilderness of rocky publications and of too many dry and sandy sermons (some of mine are pretty arid). But this yapping on a hill may venture to call some beloved brethren to repentance.

Among us are religious leaders and religious banner-bearers who have consistently and persistently inflicted their incomplete thinking on congregation or reader or, without proper qualification, on their students in classroom or lecture hall. Ephraim, it will be recalled, was a cake not turned. Did you ever cook battercakes? Cook one side; then turn or flip them over. A man's thoughts ought to be progressive, his mind ought to grow, his views will change, and his words must be from his heart. Consistency is a less worthy virtue than sincerity. But if one's halfbaked ideas have done harm, he should repent his spreading them as well as seek to repair the damage by publishing his more up to-date baking. There may be a time-lag between his change and the attainment of the same change by his followers, especially those who no longer can hear him regularly. His shout of correction should include, "I was wrong." Does it ever?

Each individual must keep his own conscience and do his own repenting. There are some very respectable theological books which argue that one could repent for others, which others may appropriate that by faith and thereby benefit; but the theological group in question does not justify any vague pastoral repentance or group repentance for *hoi polloi*. In homely terms, every tub must stand on its own bottom.

Perhaps our motives call for self-examination. There may be a mixture of selfishness in our ardent desire to preach a good sermon or to introduce a distinguished visitor becomingly or to unify denominations or to accomplish needed reforms or to organize a new committee. This possibility of egotistic stain in our best efforts may be suggested by one of us to others of us, but each offender must detect himself and do the human part of setting himself straight.

A terrible second World War occurred. The pious premillennialist of the extreme type which confuses faith in God with faith that God has shown him a chart of the future and enlightened him as to its meaning, who opposed the League of Nations after the other World War because he foresaw it building a throne for Anti-Christ, has some *mea culpas* to cry and some breastbeating due. The pious religious optimist, who confused faith in God with faith in human nature, and whose unrealistic opposition to international force contributed to the capture of Guam and to our defeat in Bataan, is likewise invited to the mourners' bench.

With the provincialism which may be an attendant vice of our splendid Anglo-Saxon heritage, an earnest man may see himself and the central part of the circle about him as larger and more important than the peripheral areas. In university circles we speak of changes in campus opinion or even of merely faculty opinion as if the same changes were occurring concomitantly on the farm, in the factory, and at the bar (including both brass-rail and courtroom).

A particular danger for us who struggle to keep a growing edge on our ethical perceptions and activities is that we may attain and surpass racial tolerance, growing into the much needed and Christianly racial brotherhood, while remaining intolerant of what we are pleased to label "obscurantism," "radicalism," "liberalism," "traditionalism," "narrowness," "quietism," or whatever the view is that we do not only decline to accept but unChristianly also scorn.

The writer caught himself in a despicable sin of this sort a few weeks ago. Three religious pacifists had been erroneously or carelessly transferred from a medical training center to his outfit. An honest effort was made to use them, according to their desires and to the army policy that keeps weapons out of their hands. Formerly they had been truck drivers on assignments where drivers do not carry arms. After two months here they were transferred to another outfit, slated to become clerks or cooks. Apparently this did not please them. According to a reliable officer who handled their new assignments, every one of the three told some lie about how much experience he had in my camp as canteen clerk or company clerk. Now I had watched them rather closely and had interviewed each, showing every official consideration for their pacifist opinions, though on their particular premises their position seems intellectually indefensible. But after conduct toward them which I think had been kept above reproach while they were in my command, I must confess with shame that at this news of their selfish prevarication, conscientious religious pacifists telling falsehoods, my immediate reactions were amusement and a sinful gratification not far from "I told you so."

I confess that sin and shall try not to repeat it. I have done worse, far worse. Perhaps there is room beside me at the penitents' rail for a few readers. Not that I or anyone else who reads these words must be told about your sins. Discuss them in your private prayers. Then there may be some correction which you ought to announce to your congregation. But there is no such thing as joint repentance, nor as joint confession unless each confessor has been guilty of the same offense.

The Greeks had a way of beginning their creeds with the word *Pisteuomen*, "we believe." Our Latin tradition is better: *Credo*, "I believe." Repentance, like faith, must be individual.

The Religious Level of the World Crisis*

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

THE political and economic chaos of Europe and the world, left by a war which not only reduced cities to rubble, but social systems to ruin, strikes the eye and arrests the attention of even the most cursory observer. But the spiritual and religious confusion in what was once "Christendom," is an even more profound revelation of the depth of the world crisis than the more obvious social and political perplexities of our day. If we dismiss for a moment the religious problems which confront non-Christian nations, such as Japan, we can summarize the spiritual situation in the western world rather simply as follows: most of the so-called Christian nations had ceased long before the second World War to take the Christian faith seriously, or at least, to be profoundly influenced in their thought and action by Christian presuppositions or imperatives. The vacuum left by the decline of the Christian faith was filled by various forms of political and social religion. Among these, three varieties can be rather easily identified:—

(1) The democratic liberal faith, which believed that society was moving toward a universal community and a frictionless harmony of all social life by forces inherent in history itself.

(2) The Marxist faith which believed in the same consummation but has a more catastrophic, rather than evolutionary, idea of the method of social realization. (Socialism, as expressed in the non-communistic parties, is a nice combination of the democratic and the Marxist creed.)

(3) Fascism, which is distinguished by its nationalism, particularism and cynicism from the first two creeds. Its explicit repudiation of the ethical universalism, which underlies the other two political religions, gives it an avowedly "anti-Christian" character, while the other two forms of political faith are heretical forms of the Christian religion. Fascism disavows values which democracy and socialism have inherited from Christianity but which socialism would seek to realize more fully in living and historic communities than the Christian faith believes possible. It shares with the democratic and the socialist creed the effort to reduce the meaning of human existence to purely social, political and historically realizable terms.

The Proved Inadequacy of Liberalism and Marxism as Religions

The world catastrophe through which we have gone has obviously discredited the fascist and Nazi

creed and ostensibly justified the democratic and socialist faiths. Of the three great powers who now rule the world, one will try desperately to realize democracy without socialism; one claims to have overcome and fulfilled bourgeois democracy in the communist state; and the other (great master of the historical synthesis) will seek to combine democracy with socialism. Democracy, with or without socialism, or socialism with or without democracy have won the victory; and thereby rescued "civilization," as even Christians profess to believe, from the barbarism and moral nihilism of Nazism.

Yet this historical justification of the two more generous and quasi-Christian versions of political religion is not very profound. They are vindicated as having between them, or the one in contrast to the other, the best answers to the immediate problems of human existence, particularly the problem of creating and preserving community within the conditions of a technical society.

These political religions are discredited as religious creeds by the same historical destiny which vindicated them as political programs. They may have, and probably do have, the right immediate answers to the immediate issues of life. But they claimed to be more than political programs. They pretended to be religious faiths which could give ultimate answers to the ultimate issues of human existence. They have failed in these pretensions as tragically as they have succeeded triumphantly in their political objectives. This combination of political vindication and religious bankruptcy in the quasi-Christian political creeds of our day is a part, and may indeed be the very crux, of our spiritual confusion. The vindication is obvious and is widely celebrated. The bankruptcy is not quite so obvious. Yet it is recognized by the more discerning spirits of our time.

History as such is not redemptive, as modern bourgeois liberalism had believed. The vast economic powers developed by modern technical society do not fall into a pattern of automatic harmony if anachronistic political restraints are removed, as the *laissez faire* liberals had believed. Nationalistic and racial bigotry is something more and less than mere ignorance and does not yield so simply to wider and better educational programs as idealistic liberals thought. The democratic state is not the perfect fulfillment of human desires nor is any community as final a realization of human potentialities as purely social interpretations of life avow. History does not move toward the universal community by natural process. It moves rather toward the discovery of an atomic bomb in a potential world community which lacks the will and the instruments to actualize itself.

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Thus the bomb becomes an additional hazard to, rather than the guarantee of, world peace. The bomb is thus a perfect symbolic refutation of everything that modern culture has believed about the character of human history, particularly about the redemptive quality of the historical process *per se*.

On the other hand, the more Marxist and catastrophic version of the modern historical interpretation of life is equally discredited. Russia has proved that socialism has the power to make a weak nation strong so that it could avenge an ignominious defeat of a quarter century ago. It has also proved that there are great advantages in the socialization of property for the purpose both of waging war and building a technical society. On the other hand, the totalitarian regime which has grown up under the guise of being a temporary "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a complete refutation of the utopian dreams of Marxism. The strong Russian nationalistic element in Russian politics has corrupted the original Marxist universalism just as Napoleonic imperialism once tainted the universalistic dreams of eighteenth-century liberalism. The realism, bordering on cynicism, with which Russia pursues her national interests, makes nonsense of the Marxist idea that imperialism is merely the fruit of capitalism, and of the Marxist dream of an "innocent" nation on the other side of the revolution. The very pretensions of virtue in which Russia engages, upon the basis of Marxist dogma, are a source of confusion in politics. They still impress millions of people in Europe and the world and give Russia a vexatious "fifth column" in all her dealings with other nations.

Whatever the immediate virtues of liberal or Marxist politics and programs for social justice, it is clear therefore that liberalism and Marxism as religions are discredited. They cannot deal with the ultimate issues of life. The emergence of new evils on the level of history, where utopia was expected, proves that history as such is not redemptive and that the meaning of human existence is not so simply fulfilled as modern naturalistic forms of utopianism imagined. Arthur Koestler's brilliant disavowals of his former Marxist faith may be regarded as the best expression of the disillusionment of modern man in the religious pretensions of these creeds.

The Opportunity of Christianity

Such a time would seem to be the strategic moment for the reaffirmation of the Christian faith in terms which will regain the loyalty of the multitudes and re-establish it as the source of spiritual sanity and health. Where else are men to find the resource for living in an age which will, though it boast of many historical achievements and scientific advances, also suffer from many social frustrations and disillusionments? Is it not apparent that our age will hover for a long time between the necessity and the impossibility of creating a world community, strong

and firm enough to make a technical civilization sufferable? Where but in the Christian faith do we find history so interpreted that the achievements are understood as a partial fulfillment of the meaning of our existence but where it is also understood that there is no final fulfillment of life except in the "forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting"? Where are the historical and the transhistorical dimensions of human existence so perfectly combined; so that we are taught on the one hand to pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" and, on the other hand, to confess that "if in this life only we had hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"?

Where is both the greatness and the misery of man so perfectly defined? According to the Christian faith man is a child of God, made in the image of God, but also a sinner who rebels against God and "changes the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man." The height of his spiritual stature is understood because it is known that no measurable dimension of either nature or reason can fully contain the height of man's spiritual freedom. That can be contained only in God, as he is discerned by faith. The depth of human evil is understood because it is recognized that it is a corruption of human freedom and not merely some inertia of nature or some "cultural lag." Thus the contemplation of man's dignity does not tempt to pride or the recognition of man's misery does not tempt to despair. And the vanities, boasts, lusts for power and ambition of other men and nations do not tempt to selfrighteousness because the Christian knows that all these sins are more or less exaggerated forms of the evil which he has in his own heart. Modern sentimental estimates of human nature as we have in liberalism, and synical estimates as we have in Nazism and fascism, and the combination of the two as we have in Marxism, are fruits of one-sided heresies, containing a part, but not the whole truth, about man, as he is known from the standpoint of the Christian faith.

The Christian knows that the selfish force in every life is so powerful that if man rises to the height of true unselfishness it is "by grace." If he examines his actions profoundly he must confess with St. Paul that it is "I, yet not I" which acts in true charity, the self having been drawn out of itself by some force more powerful than its own will, by some pressure of circumstance, by some inner prompting of spirit, by some impingement of the divine judge upon the human conscience. The Christian also knows that "in God's sight no man living is justified"; that in the final instance there can be no fulfillment of life without the forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, the Christian faith is prepared for the final frustration of death, an ultimate threat to the meaning of human existence which modern culture, in its various forms, has neatly but implausibly evaded.

There can be no final sanity in human existence without the faith which can say: "I am persuaded that neither, life nor death—can separate us from the love of God."

There is in other words no escape from the ultimate issues of human existence. Political and social programs which solve some of the proximate and immediate issues are sources of confusion when they claim to be final solutions for final problems. They are furthermore sources of confusion for some of the proximate issues, when they falsely mix the ultimate with the immediate.

There is, for instance, no real resource in a purely moralistic or political religion to mitigate the self-righteousness of political factions or the arrogance of nations, particularly of victorious nations. All men are self-righteous when they contend against a foe. In domestic party conflict the tory is a child of darkness to the socialist and vice-versa; in international conflict only a very profound religious faith is able to discern the mutuality of guilt which underlies the great disparity of guilt between the Nazi rebels against civilization and its "democratic" defenders. The charity and forbearance which are required to solve our domestic and international problems must come from the sense of a divine majesty which stands over and against all the pretentious majesties of human existence, mitigating their pride; and of a divine judgment more final than all historic judgments, thus restraining their false claims to finality; and of a divine fulfillment of life which offers us peace when we see that all human fulfillments and realizations have new touches of evil in them.

The Need for a New Synthesis

It is not possible, however, to present the Christian faith to our generation as the final answer to life's final problems, if the proponents of the Christian faith do not understand in all humility that the false political religions of our day gained their ascendancy partly because the Christian faith, as historically presented in the various Churches, failed so miserably in guiding mankind to a right answer for the immediate and proximate issues of human existence. Culturally Christianity has tended to obscurantism in recent centuries. It sought to make the final answer to the final problem of human existence into a series of detailed answers to detailed problems about "whence" and "how" things came into existence. It frequently insisted that the sublime truth which it asserted, and which has validity beyond and above all scientific truth, made scientific truths invalid; or it claimed that the pre-scientific symbols and myths in which the truth was expressed were literally and exactly true. This cultural obscurantism has created a great hazard to the acceptance of the Christian faith, particularly among the cultured classes of western Christendom.

But the moral and political failure of Christianity

has been even greater than its cultural failure. Christianity has made but few significant contributions toward the solution of the problems of social justice in the past two hundred years. Catholicism has been so bound to the political and social forms of the medieval period, and has such a strong nostalgic impulse for a return to them, that it cannot easily adjust itself to the political realities of a technical society. Sometimes it has even been tempted to espouse fascistic forms of politics, sensing an affinity between their authoritarianism and its own. It must be affirmed, however, that Catholicism always has a stronger sense of the communal and social dimension of existence than Protestantism, cursed as the latter has been with extravagant individualism. For this reason some of the most hopeful forms of fusion between the Christian ultimate answers and political and proximate answers are found today in Belgium, France and Italy, where left-wing Catholic movements have developed out of the experience of the resistance movements. In these movements Catholics learned from socialists and socialists from Catholics.

Orthodox Lutheranism has always been too pre-occupied with the ultimate answers to the ultimate issues of life to relate itself creatively to the questions of civic virtue and political justice. It may be that it has now learned that the building of a just community is the Christian's obligation. The Church in Norway seems particularly to have overcome the traditional weaknesses of Lutheranism in its relation to politics. We do not yet know how much the German Lutheran Church has learned.

Calvinism has always been politically more relevant than Lutheranism, but it has been frequently allied as intimately with the individualism of the more privileged bourgeois classes as Catholicism has been with the traditional feudal society. It is not yet clear whether Calvinism can overcome its historic individualism sufficiently to understand the desire of the working classes for a greater degree of control upon economic and industrial life in the interest of security. In Holland, where Calvinistic presuppositions have influenced politics more than in any modern nation, the Calvinistic party is still the representative of bourgeois life. The smaller Catholic group seems to have moved politically to the left more than it has done.

There is one untapped resource for combining religious profundity with political relevance. That is to be found in the left-wing Christian movements of the Cromwellian period. In these the Christian faith was more creatively combined with the impulse to reform the community radically in the interest of justice than in any other historic Christian movement. The resource is untapped because the perspectives of the Cromwellian sects were on the whole forgotten after the Restoration, both in the history of politics and in the history of faith. Yet this is not

altogether true. The difference between the relation of faith to social justice in Britain and in France may well be caused by the fact that seventeenth-century British demands for radical justice were developed under Christian auspices, while they expressed themselves in anti-Christian and naturalistic terms in eighteenth-century France.

Whatever may be the resources of the various forms of Christian faith in various nations for a new synthesis between the proximate and the ultimate issues of life, it can hardly be questioned that such a synthesis must take place if the Christian faith is to reclaim a sadly confused quasi-Christian culture. The political implementation of the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," amidst the conditions of a technical age, is no simple moral achievement. Only a faith which understands all the complexities of human existence can avoid the cynicism to which political realism is tempted and the sentimentality into which the purely moral approach to politics so easily degenerates. Only a faith which understands both the historical and the eternal dimensions of life can guide men in this era, in which

the fear of mutual destruction must prompt us to significant achievements in building a broader and more brotherly community, and in which we will also meet the limits of all historical achievements and be tempted to despair by the failure of history to realize its true goals.

The political faiths which are giving us on the whole the right answers to the immediate problems of preserving and extending the human community are, as religions, forms of faith without perplexity. The perplexities of our age have overwhelmed them and are creating despair. The Christian faith confesses that "we are perplexed, but not unto despair." It is a faith which has been given by grace to those who have stood at the very abyss of despair. It knows that "we are always dying" and yet is able to proclaim "but behold we live." This final answer to life's final problem of death, frustration and despair, must be related integrally to all the tasks confronted by individuals and communities as they seek to create a tolerable justice and a stable civilization and moderate security amidst the ever-increasing hazards of human existence.

The World Church: News and Notes

Polish Protestant Churches

Appeal for Help

Protestant churches in Poland are in desperate need of physical and spiritual help from America if Protestantism is to survive, according to an appeal made from Warsaw by the Council of Protestant Churches of Poland.

In Warsaw alone, the group pointed out, there is not a chapel or a church that remains undamaged, and there is little prospect that rebuilding will take place in the near future. Missions and church labor centers as well as the Protestant Hospital here were devastated during the six-year reign of Hitlerism.

"We are using every endeavor to organize philanthropic relief," the Council stated, "but this is beyond our capacity. . . . The religious life, which formerly flourished in our churches, has now the appearance of a desert. The members who have lost all their belongings suffer so seriously that the preaching of the Gospel must be combined with the rendering of material help." (RNS)

Sees Improved Prospects for Unity Among Czech Churches

Prospects for unification of all Protestant churches in Czechoslovakia are "improving," according to Dr. Frantisek Bednar, a leader of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. Dr. Bednar is dean of the John Hus faculty at the University of Prague, and president of the Czechoslovak Sunday School Association.

In an interview with Religious News Service, Dr. Bednar said he had received a letter from a pastor in Slovakia advocating that the Reformed Church there

unite with the Czech Brethren. He recalled also that Lutheran Bishop Paul Cobrada in Slovakia had indicated a favorable attitude toward unity in a speech at the Brethren Synod.

Dr. Bednar said his Church hopes to receive into membership remnants of the German Lutheran churches, most of whose members are being deported from Czechoslovakia. This can be done, he explained, without forcing any changes in liturgy.

"Our Church," the Brethren leader said, "wants at least a federation of the Protestant churches in Czechoslovakia, but prefers an even closer union, in which the Churches would continue to maintain their autonomy. Such a union would have a great influence in public life." (RNS)

Kagawa Christmas Sermon Cancelled by Occupation Authorities

A scheduled Christmas sermon by Toyohiko Kagawa, noted Japanese Protestant leader, to American servicemen in Tokyo was cancelled by the local commanding officer. Reason given for the move is that the GIs should hear an American chaplain.

Posters announcing the sermon had been hung in American billets and offices, but they were hastily removed.

Although the sermon had been scheduled by Chaplain Paul W. Yinger, formerly with Congregationalist headquarters in Washington, the cancellation was issued by higher army officials and is thought to represent the policy of the supreme command.

The ban on Kagawa followed an article by Bernard Rubin in *The Stars and Stripes*, the Army's daily pa-

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per, which revived anti-American statements attributed to Kagawa during the war. In the alleged statements Kagawa condemned American bombings and "savagery comparable to the lowest cannibalism."

Rubin's story also accused Kagawa of whipping up racial hatred against Americans as well as having had questionable relations with Yoshio Kodama, a war profiteer now in jail under charges of being a war criminal. (Richard T. Baker, RNS Correspondent)

German Churches Protest Moves

Against Some Clergymen

The first major crisis in the American Zone of Occupation between leaders of the Evangelical Church of Germany and U. S. military authorities is expected to develop in the near future unless the Army changes its policy toward former members of the Nazi party.

American directives on the subject, which are much sharper than those promulgated by the French, British and Russians, demand the removal of all persons who participated actively in the Nazi party.

Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany have officially protested to the American Military Government against alleged injustices done to thousands by wholesale mandatory removals rather than by judging cases individually.

Thus far, Military Government officials have recommended that 270 Protestant clergy be dismissed, basing their action on returns from a standard questionnaire submitted to all Germans. Church disciplinary boards already have removed more than 100 churchmen, but have refused to take action on certain others.

This policy of the boards has been supported by Bishop Theophilus Wurm, president of the Evangelical Church of Germany, who was an outstanding anti-Nazi.

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Bishop Wurm has insisted that unless the ordination vows of the clergy were broken, they cannot be dismissed for political activity.

The Evangelical Church has set up its own standards of judgment for dismissal, covering two main points: (1) Did the pastor belong to the German Christians, the pro-Nazi group within the church which assisted Hitler; and (2) Did the pastor seek a merger of the Nazi ideology with the Christian.

Even these two points, however, are not held too rigidly by Bishop Wurm and other church officials if there is reason for belief that the pastor has been "converted" and has since conducted his ministry along acceptable lines. In fact, several pastors in the American zone whose removal have been sought have outstanding anti-Nazi records dating back to 1939.

As the responsibility for denazification rests with the Office of Education and Religion, the crisis is expected to develop if the higher echelons tire of the seemingly slow progress the negotiations with church boards are making and start arresting clergymen.

Church officials think the impending disaster can be averted if religious and educational officials are given revised directives allowing them to deal with individuals, not categories. They then could implement the change by resolutely removing those pastors whose records were, and still are, bad. (Ewart E. Turner, RNS Correspondent)

Japan Episcopal Church Reorganizes

The first postwar general synod of the Japan Episcopal Church, meeting in Tokyo, started the wheels of reorganization moving after five years as an outlawed organization in Japan.

When the Religious Bodies Law was passed in 1940, Japanese Episcopalians refused to alter their constitution and canons in line with the official policy. As a consequence they were legally banned in Japan, persecuted, and their top leaders were finally thrown into jail. However, Episcopal leaders do not admit that ecclesiastically the church was dissolved.

The Episcopal leaders set up a new national council and staffed it. They resolved to incorporate the Church under the forthcoming Religious Legal Corporations Act in order to protect its property. Also, they changed the Japanese words in usage for "bishop," "presbyter," and "deacon," decided to rebuild immediately the closed Central Theological Seminary, and launched a fund-raising campaign for the rehabilitation of Episcopal churches and institutions destroyed during the war.

Under the official interpretation of the Religious Bodies Law in 1940 the Episcopal Church was required to join the United Church of Christ in Japan. Because of its unique constitution and policy, Episcopalians refused to join the union. This act made them suspected throughout the war. Churches were visited weekly by police, and members were questioned and terrorized until all but a few stayed away from church. (Richard T. Baker, RNS Correspondent)

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